



# **PACIFIC OPTIONS WG 5-14 STRATEGIC WARGAMING SERIES**

**11-12 June 2014**



**UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
Center for Strategic Leadership & Development  
650 Wright Ave  
Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013**

The findings contained in this report are based on the results of an academic wargame conducted at the United States Army War College 11-12 June 2014. Except where expressly indicated, the ideas presented are derived from the comments of the wargame participants (with their agreement to 'non-attribution'). The views contained in this report are intended to inform senior Army and Defense leaders including, but not confined to, members of the Army Staff, Geographic Combatant Commands and Army Service Component Commands. This report does not express the policies or official views of the U.S. Government, the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Army.

Game Director:	LTC Robert Scanlon	<a href="mailto:robert.j.scanlon6.mil@mail.mil">robert.j.scanlon6.mil@mail.mil</a>
Lead Author:	Professor James O. Kievit	<a href="mailto:james.o.kievit.civ@mail.mil">james.o.kievit.civ@mail.mil</a>
Lead Analyst:	Ms. Darlene Pittenger	<a href="mailto:darlene.k.pittenger.civ@mail.mil">darlene.k.pittenger.civ@mail.mil</a>
Chief, Strategic Wargaming Division:	COL Jack Pritchard	<a href="mailto:jack.k.pritchard.mil@mail.mil">jack.k.pritchard.mil@mail.mil</a>

# **STRENGTH *and* WISDOM**

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# ***PACIFIC OPTIONS***

## **WG 5-14**

### **United States Army War College Strategic Wargaming Series**

#### **Executive Summary**

On 11-12 June 2014, the U.S. Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership and Development (CSLD) conducted an unclassified Strategic Seminar Wargame (SSWG) to develop insights into how the People's Republic of China (PRC) views land power<sup>1</sup> and how the U.S. government might use American land power in the western Pacific, in conjunction with other instruments of national power, to help deter the PRC from aggressive regional actions that would adversely impact U.S. interests.

The consensus view of the SSWG participants, each with expertise regarding the PRC and the Western Pacific region, is that the PRC's concept of land power differs from that of the United States military, although the PRC's concept is not codified in doctrine. The PRC has not previously defined 'land power' within or distinct from military power, but may need to do so as the PRC's naval and air forces grow in both capabilities and capacity. To date – negating a requirement to define something which they implicitly understand – all of the most senior leaders of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)<sup>2</sup> have been ground force personnel – although this too may very likely change.

Restoration and recognition of China's place as a regional hegemon and as a "Great Power" by 2050<sup>3</sup> is the overarching goal of PRC government policies. The current PRC leadership would prefer to accomplish its objectives without fighting a war, and strongly believes an incremental and creeping advance toward its goals will lead to success and is less likely to draw significant counter-action. As a result, United States' Prevent, Shape, or Deter plans and activities – particularly those involving force presence or posture – must take into account the PRC's extended strategic timeline (as well as the PRC's own deterrence strategies vis-à-vis the United States and its regional partners).

#### **Key Findings**

##### **With respect to Land Power:**

PRC land forces include 1.6 million active and 500K reservists of the People's Liberation Army Ground Forces (PLAGF), plus 600K paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP), plus perhaps 8 million "militia."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This academic report will use the term "land power" except where actually quoting from a U.S. Army document (which generally writes the term as "Landpower").

<sup>2</sup> The People's Liberation Army (PLA) [2.3 million active] encompasses the totality of PRC military power: the People's Liberation Army Ground Force (PLAGF), the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF), the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and the Second Artillery Corps (SAC) [the PRC's nuclear and conventional strategic missile forces].

<sup>3</sup> Referred to by the Chinese as accomplishment of the "China Dream."

<sup>4</sup> All numbers are best approximations; the PRC also has approximately 1.9 million "Blue" police officers, but these are not considered part of the armed forces.

The PLA does not use the term “land power” in its military writings, nor would PLA officers define it in power-projection terms as the U.S. does. Instead the PLA, and particularly the PLAGF, focus on homeland defense,<sup>5</sup> supporting Party control, and political influence as key functions.

Even as Chinese economic interests increasingly expand the PRC’s geographic area of interest and influence, the PLA currently lacks both intelligence and power projection capabilities necessary to operate in any significant way beyond the PRC’s traditional territory.

The PRC views U.S. bases overseas as extensions of U.S. territory, and therefore as “threats.”

### **With respect to Deterrence Options:**

The best approach to avoiding significant conflict with the PRC is a wide range of engagement activities with China across all elements of national power, while simultaneously avoiding creating the perception of building a coalition opposing the “rise of,” or “attempting to ‘contain’,” the PRC.

PRC leadership doubts the United States’ willingness to spill blood and spend treasure in support of U.S. allies in the region; therefore U.S. ambiguity in word or deed, particularly regarding non-allied regional partners, increases risk and leaves more room for miscalculation.

PRC leadership tends toward an action / reaction mode of thinking. Thus, for each past U.S. action involving military positioning in the Pacific, the PRC has taken some counter-activity. The degree to which the PRC responds, and the nature of that response, may be linked to its perception of the level of threat presented. The following factors influence how provocative particular U.S. force activities are from the PRC’s perspective: (1) type of force [ground forces may be less provocative than naval or air forces<sup>6</sup>], (2) size and specific function of the force, (3) proximity to PRC territory of force presence, and (4) degree to which the force is perceived to change the status quo.

The experts reject the United States choosing to ‘mirror-image’ the PRC’s Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) approach in the Pacific as being a useful deterrent option. Indeed, their view is that the U.S. may want to reconsider its assessment of the PRC’s A2AD system’s potential effectiveness. The U.S. in fact may be “self-detering” by assigning more credibility to the PRC’s A2AD capabilities than the PLA itself does.

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<sup>5</sup> The PRC has 14 continental neighbors (four are nuclear powers, four rank in the top ten of the world’s conventional militaries by size), therefore the PLA’s viewpoint has been and currently remains principally a defensive posture aimed at protecting Chinese territory rather than projecting power offensively. See also M. Taylor Fravel, “Securing Borders: China’s Doctrine and Force Structure for Frontier Defense,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4–5, 705 – 737, August–October 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Possibly due to the relative cost/value of the platforms involved, and also to the PRC’s own land forces being seen as ‘defensive’ vice ‘offensive’ entities.

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### **With respect to Roles and Implications for the U.S. Army:**

The U.S. Army has significant opportunity to establish and / or build upon critical relationships throughout the Pacific region. In general, however, increases in military activities should be gradual as major changes to the status quo are more likely to cause PRC leadership to respond in a negative manner.

Some specific activities recommended for consideration include:

- Expand senior Army leader engagement in regional countries,
- Increase land-based intelligence collection, and expand Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) sharing with selected regional countries,
- Increase U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET) for selected regional countries,
- Expand FAO / attaché program throughout the region (both numbers and activities),
- Use U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to do more civil works and humanitarian assistance in selected regional countries, possibly including the PRC,
- Design and execute operational level officer exchange programs with selected regional countries,
- Employ existing U.S. Army Digital Liaison Detachments (DLDs) as a nucleus for multi-component Army battalion(s) specifically designed for security cooperation,
- Increase combined training exercises with selected regional countries,
- Increase prepositioned stocks in selected regional countries and afloat in the Pacific,
- Demonstrate U.S. military capability to conduct amphibious and / or airborne operations on islands in the region, and
- Return to the Philippines with limited basing.

### **With respect to Regional Perceptions:**

Many Asian countries view the U.S. rebalance to the Pacific as having too great a military, and insufficient economic, focus. Given the relative high visibility of military activities vice commercial economic ones, this may indicate a requirement for additional strategic communication efforts to alter perceptions of the full scope of the U.S. rebalance. That said:

- Most regional countries will generally welcome some level of increased U.S. military interaction(s); they do not, however, want to be forced to choose between the PRC and the United States.



- If the PRC continues to increase its armed forces capabilities and capacities, other countries in the region may well feel compelled to do likewise.<sup>7</sup> Such a regional “arms race” would be inimical to U.S. interests; thus the U.S. needs simultaneously to dissuade the PRC from further military build-up and to reassure allies and potential partners that the U.S. military can – and will – assist with the defense of the Western Pacific region as necessary.<sup>8</sup>
- Given the PRC’s view of land power, the fact that Vietnam possesses a land border with China makes it attractive as a potential U.S. partner. For the same reasons, Vietnam would probably welcome additional mil-to-mil engagement, including Foreign Military Sales (FMS).<sup>9</sup>
- Reactions of those regional countries not allied with the U.S. should be viewed as barometers or “canaries in the coal mine” with respect to whether proposed U.S. actions are too provocative or seem to be promoting military activities to too great an extent.

## Related Questions

Some additional issues requiring consideration by DOD and the Army:

- How and to what degree can the PLA project and sustain military forces via commercial assets?
- What are the potential impacts of evolving PRC political and diplomatic leverage on a U.S. ability to use bases, territory, airspace, etc. in Latin America or Africa to support U.S. operations elsewhere?
- What are the potential impacts of PRC-provided space assets and telecom infrastructures in Latin America or Africa on future conflict scenarios, both locally and in other regions?
- How does the U.S. respond to potential PRC asymmetric activities in Latin America or Africa?
- How should the U.S. monitor and respond to the global expansion of Chinese organized crime activities?
- How can the U.S. maintain a consistent resource flow for International Military Education & Training (IMET), FMS, and uni-, bi-, and multi-lateral exercises in the Pacific region?
- How can the U.S. develop a better understanding of the PRC’s long-term strategy and its implications for U.S. global and theater strategy development and implementation?
- How can the U.S. compete with China and reduce their influence without sparking a ‘Cold War’ or confrontation?

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example Geoff Hiscock, “Japan’s defense plans raise hackles in China,” 12 August 2014; downloaded 13 August 2014 at [http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/12/world/asia/japan-china-defense-analysis/index.html?iid=article\\_sidebar](http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/12/world/asia/japan-china-defense-analysis/index.html?iid=article_sidebar) .

<sup>8</sup> As previously stated, U.S. activities must not, however, be aimed at – or perceivable by either the PRC or the other regional nations as – pursuing “containment.”

<sup>9</sup> Presuming the Vietnamese can adjust their policies/behavior sufficiently to allow the Executive Branch to seek easing or elimination of current Congressional restrictions on such activities.

# ***PACIFIC OPTIONS***

## **United States Army War College WG 5-14 Report**

### **Overview**

On 11-12 June 2014, the U.S. Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership and Development conducted an unclassified Strategic Seminar Wargame (SSWG) entitled *PACIFIC OPTIONS*. This was the first in a proposed three part series to examine deterrence, shaping, and conflict de-escalation / resolution in the Western Pacific. The *PACIFIC OPTIONS* SSWG was designed to develop insights into how the People's Republic of China (PRC) views land power<sup>10</sup> and insights into how the U.S. government might use American land power in the western Pacific to help -- in conjunction with other instruments of national power -- deter the PRC from regional actions that would adversely impact U.S. interests.

### **Objectives**

- Describe the PRC's concept / perception of land power
- Develop and analyze a list of recommended options available for the use of U.S. land power to deter conflict with the PRC
- Describe both the PRC's and other regional actors' perceptions of the options, and potential reactions / consequences
- Identify possible roles and potential implications for the U.S. Army

### **Methodology**

The SSWG was conducted without reference to any current or proposed U.S. Pacific Command Theater Strategy, to allow the participants maximum freedom to introduce and consider differing options.

Believing that the U.S. must understand how the PRC thinks about land power as an instrument in order to employ U.S. land power as a means to influence / deter PRC actions, the participants first were provided the following U.S. Army definition<sup>11</sup> of "Strategic Landpower":

*Landpower is the ability—by threat, force, or occupation—to gain, sustain, and exploit control over land, resources, and people.*

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<sup>10</sup> This academic report will use the term "land power" except where actually quoting from a U.S. Army document (which generally writes the term as "Landpower").

<sup>11</sup> Department of the Army, *The Army*, ADP 1 *change 1* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November 7, 2012), para 1-8, page 1-4, accessed online 17Jul14 at [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_a/pdf/adp1.pdf](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp1.pdf). There is no current officially accepted Joint U.S. Military definition for land power.

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- Impose the Nation's will on an enemy, by force if necessary
- Engage to influence, shape, prevent, and deter in any operational environment
- Establish and maintain a stable environment that sets the conditions for political and economic development
- Address the consequences of catastrophic events—both natural and man-made— to restore infrastructure and reestablish basic civil services
- Secure and support bases from which joint forces can influence and dominate the air, land, and maritime domains of an operational environment

and were asked to address to what degree the PRC and People's Liberation Army (PLA) have the same -- or a differing -- conception of land power.

Following that dialogue, participants were asked to identify alternative future circumstances which might lead to potential hostile confrontations between the PRC and the United States; the group then selected two of the alternatives as a basis for addressing the objectives related to options, regional actors' reactions, and implications for the U.S. Army (see Appendix 1).

The *PACIFIC OPTIONS* SSWG concluded with a presentation of findings by the participants during an Executive Panel session.

## Results

### Context

Accomplishment of the "China Dream" is the overarching goal of the PRC government. China had been the largest economy and the preeminent culture in the world throughout much of history. The China Dream centers on restoring the PRC to what its leaders believe is its rightful place in the world – a true Great Power both militarily and economically – by 2050.<sup>12</sup> Taking this long-term view, current PRC leadership is very deliberate in their decision-making, preferring successful incremental and creeping advances rather than risking widespread or rapid action that might draw a significant opposing response.

Despite its continental neighborhood, the PRC currently feels its borders are secure from invasion.<sup>13</sup> During most of the past 60 years social unrest has required the PRC's leaders to focus on internal security, including the necessary supporting "China

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<sup>12</sup> The "China Dream" may be temporally linked to either or both of two upcoming centennial celebrations: the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party in 2021, or the 100th anniversary of the People's Republic of China in 2049; game participants believe PRC government words and deeds favor the latter interpretation.

<sup>13</sup> The PRC has 14 continental neighbors, four of which are nuclear powers. This has meant that a defensive posture protecting Chinese territory rather than offensive posture projecting power has been the PLA's historically predominant viewpoint.

Dream” objectives of societal and economic modernization. Apparently satisfied with progress in those spheres, the PRC leadership now looks outward to achieve offshore interests. Taiwan obviously remains high on the interest list. Moreover, PRC leaders view other territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas as “recovering” stolen territories and claiming as their rightful due the economic resources designated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Therefore the PRC desires, and pursues, more tangible evidence – possession – to present to the international community, beyond just a traditional Chinese argument of historical precedence, to bolster its claims to regional hegemony and Great Power status. Accordingly, the PRC’s short-term military capability and capacity objective is to generate sufficient maritime power – specifically a ‘blue-water’ navy – to support achievement of those “recoveries.”

Prevention, shaping, or deterrence activities by the United States, especially those involving presence or posture in the Western Pacific, must take into account this PRC “China Dream” extended-timeline – both planning and operating with the same extended-timeline to increase the chances that U.S. influence activities will succeed.

### **The PRC’s concept of land power**

The PRC definitely views land power differently than the United States. There is not a clear, direct Chinese representation in its military writings of the U.S. concepts of “Services” and “Joint,” nor does the PRC use the term “land power” in those documents. Implied within those writings, however, a PRC definition for land power might read: “The ability to defend the homeland from external and internal threats, ensure continuity of The Party, provide consequence management, project the national political will, and set conditions for political and economic growth.”

Throughout its history, the PRC has had an Army-dominated military, more regional than global in terms of geographical outlook, and with only minimal integration across its land, air and sea segments.<sup>14</sup> The People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA)<sup>15</sup> senior-most leaders have all been People’s Liberation Army Ground Force (PLAGF) officers. Assuming this may change as the PRC shifts more of its focus onto naval and air power, it also then may be forced to explicitly define land power.

The PRC’s land power forces include the People’s Liberation Army Ground Force (PLAGF) [~1.6M active; 500K reservists], the paramilitary People’s Armed Police (PAP)

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<sup>14</sup> Only within the last couple of years has the PRC ever officially stated it is a “maritime power.”

<sup>15</sup> The PRC’s military instrument, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), encompasses four elements: (1) the People’s Liberation Army Ground Force (PLAGF), (2) the People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF), (3) the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and (4) the Second Artillery Corps (SAC) [the PRC’s nuclear and conventional strategic missile forces].

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[~600K] and the ‘militia’ [~8M]<sup>16</sup>. The SSWG participants believe that the PRC’s cyberspace operations capabilities also are considered by the PRC’s leadership to be an integral part of the PRC’s land power. The approximately 1.9 million members of provincial and local police forces, however, are not.

*Functions of PRC land power, in priority:*

- *Ensure Communist Party survival and control.* Chinese view the military as an important political influencer; the PLA – and particularly the PLAGF – serves specifically and directly as a mechanism of the Party to maintain pre-eminence.<sup>17</sup>
- *Ensure internal stability.* The PLAGF is tasked to suppress extremism, separatism and terrorism that has both domestic components within the PRC and external roots outside the PRC’s borders.
- *Defend the national territory and ensure border security.* The PRC has 14 immediate continental neighbors [four armed with nuclear weapons], therefore *the* major mission for the PLA is protecting the territory of the PRC<sup>18</sup> rather than projecting power. This also is reflected by the PLA’s daily commitment to static border security – deploying approximately 200,000 active duty PLAGF on the borders augmented by 100,000 PAP.
- *Respond to regional contingencies.* The PLAGF is expected to assist with the management of crises on the PRC’s periphery (the PLA has no or only a very limited sense of how to employ land power for “out of area” operations). Because of its local focus, the PLA thus far has not developed significant projection enablers; e.g., currently it must hire civilian transport to move land forces overseas. With the expansion of the PRC’s economic interests beyond its immediate neighbors there is a potentially increased possibility of missions beyond the PLAGF’s traditional territory, but it currently lacks both sufficient intelligence capabilities and power projection capacities to do so to any significant degree.
- *Non-traditional security missions.* PLAGF elements participate in selected out-of-PRC Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR),<sup>19</sup> peacekeeping and counter-terror operations (e.g., anti-piracy). Peacekeeping operations in particular have been viewed as a diplomatic tool, to increase PRC influence or gain access to areas of interest.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The militia consists of a “primary” militia (persons under age 28 who either are soldiers discharged from active service or who have received military training) and an “ordinary” militia (all other male citizens from age 18 through 35 qualified for military service). The “primary” militia may include female personnel in certain specialties.

<sup>17</sup> Unlike the U.S. armed forces commitment to support and defend the Constitution, for the PLA and particularly the PLAGF this is true *political* allegiance with a capital “P.”

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, M. Taylor Fravel, “Securing Borders: China’s Doctrine and Force Structure for Frontier Defense,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4–5, 705 – 737, August–October 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Particularly the PRC’s Earthquake Reaction Team.

<sup>20</sup> Of note, recently the PLA leadership has been engaged in a written debate similar to that in the U.S. in the 1990’s: whether too much military time and too many military resources are being expended on ‘non-standard’ missions.

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## **Options for the Use of U.S. Land Power for Deterrence:**

The United States' best approach to avoiding significant conflict with the PRC is widespread engagement activities with the PRC across the full spectrum of national power, while simultaneously avoiding creating any perception of building a coalition either opposed to the "rise of China" or intended to "contain" the PRC.

As much as possible, when disputes do arise the United States should encourage law enforcement agency (Coast Guard, police, etc.) involvement rather than regional nations' military response activities to reduce the risk of / pressure for escalation.<sup>21</sup>

Selected U.S. Army trust building activities (e.g., Humanitarian Assistance; Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange) directly with the PRC,<sup>22</sup> to accomplish some of their internal objectives that are not counter to U.S. interests, could help to ensure a stable domestic environment and perhaps reduce internal pressures for outside adventurism.

With respect to the initiation of additional activities to assure allies and potential partners, or to build greater partner capabilities and capacities, participants stated that the PRC leadership tends toward an action - reaction mode of thinking. Most if not all past U.S. actions involving military positioning in the Pacific have usually resulted in the PRC undertaking some counter-activity. The degree to which the PRC responds, and the nature of that response, is linked to its perception of the U.S. 'threat.' The following factors influence how provocative particular U.S. military actions are perceived by the PRC leadership:

- *Type of force.* Possibly due to the relative cost / value of the platforms, and also due to the PRC's own land forces being seen as 'defensive' vice 'offensive' entities, ground forces seem generally to be perceived as less provocative than naval or air forces; e.g. the PRC views a carrier strike group (CSG) as a definitive symbol of U.S. national power, so it is more provocative.
- *Size and specific function of force.* For example, a single ship vs. a CSG, or a medical platoon as less threatening than an artillery battery.
- *Proximity to China.* The PRC views increases in military capabilities or capacities within countries with contiguous land borders very seriously.

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<sup>21</sup> Currently both Japan and China use civilian law enforcement vessels to patrol the Senkakus to prevent the occupation of those islands – it appears both countries are trying to deter without military escalation.

<sup>22</sup> Always remaining within National Defense Authorization Act parameters; see "U.S.-China Military Contacts: Issue for Congress," Shirley A. Kan, Congressional Research Service, 29 July 2014; downloaded 13 August 2014 at < <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL32496.pdf> >.

- *Who is partnering with the force – to what degree does the force change the status quo?* China considers U.S. power projection as provocative and views expansion of U.S. bases in the region as a threat.

These perceptions potentially afford the United States more freedom to undertake influence activities with land power in the region. Furthermore, incremental activities over an extended period – avoiding rapid or dramatic increases in forces in an area -- may temper or even preclude Chinese reactions.

The U.S. should not adopt a ‘mirror-imaging’ of the PRC’s Anti-Access / Area Denial (A2AD) posture. Indeed, rather than viewing pursuit of U.S. A2AD capabilities or enabling partner development of A2AD as useful deterrent options, the experts instead suggested the U.S. needs to reevaluate its assessment of the PRC’s A2AD actual potential effectiveness. Several suggested that the United States may be self-detering, assigning much more credibility to the PRC’s A2AD capabilities and capacities than the PLA’s own analyses do (although the PLA is perfectly willing to encourage the U.S. to continue to believe the system is fully effective, of course).

### **Implications for the U.S. Army:**

Even forgoing developing and fielding new A2AD capabilities, there remain significant opportunities for the U.S. Army to build upon and / or establish critical relationships throughout the Pacific region. Specific Army activities recommended for consideration include (least-to-most provocative, from a PRC perspective):

- *Expand senior U.S. Army leader engagement in selected regional countries.*
- *Use U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to do more civil works and humanitarian assistance on the ground in selected regional countries, possibly including the PRC.* Examples would be water production, energy generation, flood control / dams,<sup>23</sup> ports, road construction, or HADR activities. In most of the region’s countries the Army is the main response mechanism for HADR.
- *Expand Military Medicine Cooperation/Medical Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETE) / Medical Exchanges.* Drug resistant malaria is an emerging problem in Northern Myanmar, in Central Vietnam, and on the Thailand/ Cambodian border. The United States could expand bilateral and multilateral research and military medicine, including with the PRC.<sup>24</sup> Indigenous military personnel often get

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<sup>23</sup> For example, under the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), and the Mississippi-Mekong Sister River partnership, USACE hosted a delegation from the Mekong River countries to the Mississippi Valley Division, the Engineering Research and Development Center, the Great Rivers Education and Research Center and HQUSACE in 2011.

<sup>24</sup> The United States is currently pushing pandemic response, calling it comparative clinical practice – Eastern medical practices/ Western medical practices. The surgeon’s office from USARPAC invited the Chinese to host the annual Asia-Pacific Military Medicine Conference (APMMC). The PRC seems hesitant about pandemic response, perhaps because PRC leaders believe the United States treated them unfairly during the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) response.

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diseases first because they operate in remote places. Cooperation on military medicine might help reduce PRC concerns about U.S. activities with its neighbors.

- *Expand FAO / attaché program throughout the region (both numbers and activities).* Add more FAOs and attachés in the embassies (both in SE Asian countries and in the PRC) – have 3 to 4 FAOs per country. Also consider FAOs who would not be in the embassies but as LNOs within the regional countries' ground force headquarters, with responsibility for coordinating interactions with U.S. Regionally Aligned Forces.<sup>25</sup>
- *Increase routine U.S. land-based ISR operations, and share the results with regional nations (particularly Vietnam and the Philippines).* The increase in activities and intention to share “regionally” could be announced; specific countries being shared with need not and probably should not be public.
- *Increase U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET), particularly with Vietnam and the Philippines.* Place additional U.S. Army trainers with the Philippine Army. In the past Vietnam has wanted to limit IMET with the United States, but participants believe the oil rig situation now is changing that and Vietnam will likely welcome IMET overtures by the end of 2014.
- *In the theater (but not initially in disputed areas to avoid being overly provocative) ramp-up U.S. existing presence missions and training activities.* E.g., hold more bi- and multi-lateral land power exercises in Australia; perhaps in Indonesia.
- *Negotiate for and implement operational level U.S. Army officer exchange programs for officers within the operational and perhaps even tactical level headquarters elements of regional land forces.* In the Philippines, for example, consider arranging for appropriate-grade U.S. officers (perhaps from Regionally Aligned Forces) to serve tours of duty as S3s, S2s, or XO in Filipino units.
- *Set up a U.S. Army headquarters in the Philippines for managing increased U.S. engagement activities.* Perhaps by augmenting a Joint Military U.S. Assistance Group (JUSMAG) with command and control (C2) capabilities – similar to what U.S. Army Japan has.<sup>26</sup>
- *Consider employing existing U.S. Army Digital Liaison Detachments (DLDs) as a nucleus for multi-component Army battalion(s) specifically designed for foreign military assistance.* Consider developing these units – conceptually similar to the air / naval gunfire liaison companies (ANGLICO) that the U.S. military created between World Wars I and II – as a means to increase indigenous forces' access to U.S. space, cyber, intelligence, precision-strike, and theater logistics capabilities without providing them permanent capabilities that might make them more provocative to the PRC or potentially aggressive toward each other. For example, one or more such U.S. DL battalions could be aligned to the Philippine Army. While

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<sup>25</sup> This would have the additional benefit of exposing the FAOs to operational experiences.

<sup>26</sup> Justification for U.S. Army Japan's JUSMAG with C2 organization is for the defense of Japan because Japan is a treaty ally; similar justification could be used. Careful characterization - avoiding the label of a conventional operational-level headquarters – might make it less likely for the PRC to respond in ways inimical to U.S. interests.

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it would train with the Filipinos, it would not necessarily need to be physically stationed in the Philippines. The DL battalions could / should be multi-component: partly composed of active duty members kept up-to-date on employment of critical joint technology / processes involved, and partly of reserve members with special cultural, linguistic, logistical, and other skills. If a crisis emerges, these U.S. units would not only provide access to enhanced capabilities to the indigenous forces, but would also provide several levels of deterrent messaging to the PRC: (1) when the reserve component element is mobilized; (2) when the entire unit is deployed to the Pacific theater (although not yet to the P.I.); and (3) when the unit actually is deployed to the Philippines.<sup>27</sup>

- *Increase prepositioned stocks at selected locations in regional countries and afloat in the Pacific.* Increase Army Headquarters prepositioned stocks in the Philippines; increase prepositioned stocks ashore in Singapore.<sup>28</sup> Ensure that prepositioned ships already in the Pacific are fully loaded.
- *Demonstrate a U.S. military capability to conduct forced entry operations (whether by amphibious landing or airborne forces) on one or more islands in the disputed regions.* A demonstration in the context of the Philippines rather than in the context of Vietnam would likely be perceived as less “in China’s face” and therefore less confrontational by the PRC. Ground forces for the demonstration could be either U.S. Army<sup>29</sup> and/or Marine Corps.<sup>30</sup>
- *Increase the type and tempo of combined training exercises with countries which are in disputes with China.* In order to reduce the possibility of an adverse Chinese response, increase exercises gradually each year rather than making major increases over a short timeframe.
- *Return to the Philippines with limited basing.*

### **With respect to Regional Perceptions:**

Many Asian countries view the U.S. rebalance to the Pacific as having too great a military focus, and insufficient economic. This indicates a requirement for additional strategic communication efforts to present the full scope of the rebalance. U.S. messaging to allies also is important in maintaining reasonable expectations on the part of allies with regard to U.S. support of their defense, as well as to influence – perhaps

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<sup>27</sup> Some of these DL battalions might be designed as generic global forces so they could support any U.S. ally or multinational partner and not just those in the Western Pacific.

<sup>28</sup> Thailand and / or Vietnam are also potentially attractive locations for PREPO sites; however, both current political issues and perceived provocativeness due to proximity to the PRC’s land border make them less so.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Army forces have done amphibious landings in the past, but do not currently possess the ability or plan, to project brigade or division level forces in theater rapidly. The Army may want to investigate identifying or acquiring additional projection assets to be able to do so.

<sup>30</sup> Marines from in-theater could be used or Marines could be brought from the United States to send a different signal than if in-theater Marines were used; however, the PRC might perceive Marine forces as more provocative than Army forces. If Marine forces are used, Army forces still would be needed to provide sustainment for them beginning about 4 days after the landing.

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temper – allies’ potential actions that could provoke military responses of the PRC. That said:

- Most regional countries will generally welcome some level of increased U.S. military interaction(s); they do not, however, want to be forced to choose between the PRC and the United States.
- If the PRC continues to increase its armed forces capabilities and capacities, other countries in the region may well feel compelled to do likewise. Such a regional “arms race”<sup>31</sup> would be inimical to U.S. interests, thus the U.S. needs simultaneously to dissuade the PRC from further military build-up and to reassure allies and potential partners that the U.S. military can – and will – assist with the defense of the Western Pacific region as necessary.<sup>32</sup>
- Other countries in the region will generally favor U.S. Army Corps of Engineers activities in or with the PRC; perceiving the U.S. military as working with China would help mitigate the belief that they are being forced to choose sides.<sup>33</sup>
- The Philippines’ government likely will generally welcome greater U.S. land power cooperation. However, increased U.S. Army activities in the islands require careful consideration because they also might:
  - Increase internal instability in the Philippines – some politically active and vocal Filipinos might view any increase in activity in the Philippines as the United States attempting to take over and bring them under U.S. colonial control. Worst case, there could be terrorist actions against U.S. troops.
  - Embolden Philippine actions in the South China Sea.
- Given the PRC’s view of land power, the fact that Vietnam possesses a land border with China makes it attractive as a potential partner. For the same reasons, Vietnam would probably welcome additional mil-to-mil engagement, including Foreign Military Sales (FMS).<sup>34</sup> However,
  - Vietnam has the complication of being a communist country with documented human rights violations.
  - Vietnam might still desire to maintain its military cooperation with the PRC, e.g., also send officers for training with the PLA.
  - Establishing a near-term U.S. Army presence in Vietnam is unlikely and probably undesirable.

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<sup>31</sup> See, for example Geoff Hiscock, “Japan’s defense plans raise hackles in China,” 12 August 2014; downloaded 13 August 2014 at [http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/12/world/asia/japan-china-defense-analysis/index.html?iid=article\\_sidebar](http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/12/world/asia/japan-china-defense-analysis/index.html?iid=article_sidebar).

<sup>32</sup> As previously stated, U.S. activities must not, however, be aimed at – or perceivable by either the PRC or the other regional nations as – pursuing “containment.”

<sup>33</sup> A potential downside may be a competing ‘demand’ for more USACE work in their own countries.

<sup>34</sup> Presuming the Vietnamese can adjust their policies/behavior sufficiently to allow the Executive Branch to seek easing or elimination of current Congressional restrictions on such activities.

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- Australia, Japan, and South Korea generally would support increased U.S. mil-to-mil engagement activities in the Western Pacific; neither of the latter are likely to welcome additional basing overtures, however.
- Recent events in the South China Sea have somewhat alarmed Malaysia and Indonesia. Each has had periods of good mil-to-mil cooperation with the U.S. in the past, and may welcome additional efforts now. Neither is likely to welcome basing overtures.

Relationship building with partner nations typically does not result in an immediately apparent positive change in capabilities, capacities, or the operational environment. Building trust takes time; yet most U.S. bilateral or multinational planning meetings expect the participants to report some type of near-term deliverable – often an unrealistic expectation. On the other hand, the reactions of those regional countries not directly allied with the U.S. should be viewed as barometers or “canaries in the coal mine” with respect to whether proposed U.S. actions are too provocative or seem to be promoting military activities to too great an extent.

#### **Constraints and possible Risks:**

- *Reciprocity.* With respect to increasing FAOs and placing officers in headquarters, some countries may want to reciprocate and the United States probably would not accept Western Pacific officers into most U.S. tactical or operational headquarters.
- *Personnel End Strength Issues.* To expand the FAO / attaché program the Army would have to make force structure adjustments, pulling personnel from other slots, and paying for training and education courses. Increasing the number of FAOs would be a long term commitment of time and money; a cultural adjustment would be required across the Army as well.
- *Political Reaction.* Some in Washington may view U.S. Army Corps of Engineers activities in the PRC as strengthening the capabilities of the Chinese Communist Party to maintain its authoritarian control of its country, thus inhibiting the potential emergence of democracy.
- *People’s Republic of China Reactions:*
  - It is possible for the PRC to view almost any of the options recommended as attempting further ‘containment’ of China. From the PRC’s leadership perspective, this could justify their being more aggressive in the region. Thus, rather than moderating conflict the United States could set in motion PRC actions to counter existing or deter additional U.S. activities.
  - The PRC could potentially increase its version of IMET by offering up more seats and creating new courses.
  - There might be a PRC or PLA effort to exploit the increase in Western Pacific officers, particularly Vietnamese, attending U.S. PME or training activities to gather intelligence.

- The PRC might view the attempt to engage with USACE as insincere since China would view these mission types as peripheral activities rather than core functions of armies. The PRC may think the United States is avoiding engaging the PLA on the matters that are of critical importance – e.g., warfighting.
- Taiwan could be a red line for the PRC leadership – a trigger for Chinese counter-action. If the United States holds off on including Taiwan when pursuing these options, although they would certainly note the activities, the PRC will be less likely to respond in rash or unpredictable ways.

## Conclusion

Throughout the SSWG participants identified and evaluated multiple national and regional viewpoints that should be taken into account in the formulation of U.S. policy toward the Western Pacific and the creation of associated strategies and implementation plans. The options suggested in this report are those which, to improve the likelihood of progress toward existing U.S. policy objectives, they believed merited further consideration by the U.S. Army and by U.S. Pacific Command Theater Strategy and Theater Campaign Plan developers.

## Related Questions

As a further result of the development and execution of the *PACIFIC OPTIONS* SSWG, the U.S. Army War College identifies the following as additional issues requiring consideration by DOD and the Army:

- How and to what degree can the PLA project and sustain military forces via commercial assets?
- What are the potential impacts of evolving PRC political and diplomatic leverage on the U.S. ability to use bases, territory, airspace, etc. in Latin America<sup>35</sup> or Africa to support U.S. operations elsewhere?
- What are the potential impacts of PRC-provided space assets and telecom infrastructures in Latin America or Africa on future conflict scenarios, both locally and in other regions?
- How can and should the U.S. respond to potential PRC asymmetric activities in Latin America or Africa?
- How should the U.S. monitor and respond to the global expansion of Chinese organized crime activities?

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, “China Fills the Vacuum Left by the United States in Latin America,” by R. Evan Ellis, William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, Washington, D.C., 4 August 2014. Downloaded 12 August 2014 at [https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wda/hemisphericpolicy/Perspectives\\_on\\_the\\_Americas/Ellis%20Final%20Paper.pdf](https://umshare.miami.edu/web/wda/hemisphericpolicy/Perspectives_on_the_Americas/Ellis%20Final%20Paper.pdf).

### **Related Questions (continued)**

- How can the U.S. maintain a consistent resource flow for International Military Education & Training (IMET), FMS, and uni-, bi-, and multi-lateral exercises in the Pacific region?
- How can the U.S. develop a better understanding of the PRC's long-term strategy and its implications for U.S. global and theater strategy development and implementation?

## Appendix 1

### Participants' Potential Future "Headlines" for the Asia-Pacific Region

As part of the game methodology, the participants each were asked to identify and briefly describe one alternative future set of circumstances which he / she believed potentially might escalate to a hostile confrontation between the PRC and the United States, and then to summarize that situation as a news "headline" for ease of reference by the group. Once all the individual situations had been laid out, the group as a whole selected two of the alternatives as the basis for examining and addressing the game objectives related to options, regional actor' reactions, and implications for the U.S. Army. The "future 'headlines'" suggested were:

- 'China Conducting Joint Venture with [nation name] in Southeast Asia'
- **'China Takes Control of Last of Spratly Islands'\*\***
- 'Chinese Coast Guard Bumps U.S. Navy Ship: Fishery Dispute near Guam'
- 'Chinese Defense Spending Increases 12% - Supports Growing Presence in South and East China Sea'
- 'China's New Leader Consolidates Power Quickly – Presses for Bolder Action in East China Sea and South China Sea'
- 'New Chinese President Prepares the Nation for Showdown with U.S. in Asia Pacific'
- 'China Completes Anti-Containment Guarantee'
- **'Chinese "Volunteers" Land on Disputed Japanese Islands'\*\***

*\*\* These were the two circumstances the group elected to examine in some detail*



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